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ABSTRACT

A program was designed, developed, and implemented to increase the participation of fourth-grade students in a district-wide storytelling festival in Florida. The target school was the only one in the area to send no students to the festival year after year. The program was planned to work with 10 students in a storytelling practicum with 3 goals, all of which were met. The first objective was that after 12 weeks of workshops on storytelling techniques, at least 2 students would participate in the annual storytelling festival. In fact, 7 attended. The second objective was that after 9 weeks of workshops, at least 50% of the students would tell a story from memory. In fact, 7 told a story. The third objective was that after 4 weeks of workshops, at least 80% would tell a story to a small group. In fact, all the students were able to do so. Techniques for achieving the objectives included group improvisations, vocal and physical exercises, creative dramatics, and participation in a preview performance. The good results obtained suggest that experience and exposure to storytelling are beneficial to students. Appendixes include a teacher survey; criteria for story selection and guidelines; story sequencing; storytelling criteria evaluation; and a newspaper article about the festival. Contains 18 references. (Author/TB)

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ED 401 531

INCREASING THE PARTICIPATION OF FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS IN A STORYTELLING FESTIVAL

by

Karen Poulsen

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A Final Report submitted to the Faculty of the Fischler Center for the Advancement of Education of Nova Southeastern University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

The abstract of this report may be placed in the University database for reference.

June 1996

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Abstract

Increasing the Participation of Fourth Grade Students in a Storytelling Festival.
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Descriptors: Storytelling/Oral Expression/Storytelling Festivals/Media Center Curriculum/Storytelling by Children.

This program was designed, developed, and implemented to increase the participation of fourth grade students in a district-wide Storytelling Festival. The three objectives for the program were to have at least two of the targeted students participate in the Annual Storytelling Festival, to have at least 50% of the targeted students tell a story from memory, and to have at least 80% of the targeted students tell a story in a small group. The target group for this program was 10 fourth graders. Techniques for achieving the objectives included group improvisations, vocal and physical exercises, creative dramatics, and participation in a preview performance. All of the practicum objectives were met, especially the first as seven of the students participated in the district's Storytelling Festival. Appendices include an Elementary School Teacher Survey, Criteria for Story Selection and Guidelines, Story Sequencing, Storytelling Criteria Evaluation, and a Newspaper Article.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. When it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other professionals in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Karen Poulsen
student's signature

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May 5, 1996
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PROJECT VERIFICATION FORM

Dear Mentor:

Practicum students in Nova Southeastern University's GEM programs for master's and educational specialist degrees are asked to provide verification that the project activities reported in this document took place as described. On this sheet please write a brief overview attesting to your knowledge of the project activity to which this will be attached. Note that you are not asked to evaluate or make judgements about the quality of the project on this page.

Practicum Title Increasing the Participation of Fourth Grade Students in a Storytelling Festival.

Student's Name Karen Poulsen Completion date May 4, 1996

Project Site Horizon Elementary School, Port Orange, FL

Mentor's Name STEVE JOHNSTON (print) Steve Johnston (signature)

Mentor's position at the site Principal Phone # 904-756-7150

Comment on impact of the project (handwritten):

Karen Poulsen met once a week for 4 months with a group of 10 fourth grade students to teach them the art of storytelling. Her lessons included highly motivational activities, observation of other storytellers and many opportunities for the students to practice telling stories they had selected. The students are excited about participating in the Children's Storytelling Festival sponsored by the Volusia County Public Library on May 4th.

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

Background

The target community, 21 square miles, was located in the east central coastal part of Florida, just south of an internationally known tourist city and approximately 54 miles from the nearest large metropolitan city. As this was one of the county's fastest growing incorporated cities, it had increased in population from 3,781 in 1970 to an estimated population of 43,075 in 1994. The projected population in 2000 is 51,700. It was part of a larger metropolitan area of some 155,000.

The growth of the community was a result of residential development, commercial activity, and the entry of new service industries. As a highly residential area, the community had 13 city parks and 17 churches. To meet the needs of this thriving community, a new county library was built. A new elementary school was completed the year before, making a total of five in the fast-growing

community. There was only one middle school, but there were two high schools, one of which was only a year old. This middle-class community had an extremely high population of whites at 98%, with only a 5% black population, and 8% mixed ethnic origin.

The community was immediately adjoined to a major tourist city with 24 miles of beaches, which had an international speedway, and was in a popular spring break destination, which contained hundreds of motels ranging from those with over 200 rooms to small "Mom and Pop" units. Although this community was very close to the popular tourist attractions, it only had three hotel/motels and one golf course. The city's Parks and Recreation Department was the host to a spectacular Fourth of July celebration.

The target elementary school, was located in a residential area, and included kindergarten through grade five. The school was composed of 10 buildings that included classrooms for each grade level, and Exceptional Student Education, as well as the Media Center, administrative offices, and a cafeteria. The Media Center was bright and open, allowing the media specialist to observe users from any location, and had a separate area for both storing equipment and as a

stage area for filming morning announcements. With the growth of the community, nine portable classrooms supplemented the attractive seven-year-old buildings. After receiving numerous complaints of poor air quality, roof repair and air handling reconstruction was in progress. Other than this, the school was clean and well maintained.

The percentage of fourth grade students scoring above the national median scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills was 59% in reading and 67% in math. The school's goal was to continue to increase the scores. Scores from the State Writing Assessment showed the fourth grade students received an average of 2.0%. The state average was 2.2% on a scale that ranged from a low score of zero to a high score of six.

Several goals of the school were met in the previous two years. One of them was the initiation of a monthly newsletter, which provided increased communication with parents and gave teachers an opportunity to inform parents of changes and new resources such as the new Parent Resource Library. The school designed several programs to continue their goal to increase communication between the school and family involvement in the school. Some of the family programs offered were, Pre-Kindergarten, an Exceptional Student Education Family Education

Program, Kindergarten Orientation, and Foster Grandparents. Once a year, during United Nations Month, family members attended a parade of the countries during which each class wore the costumes they had created from different countries. Some students were also selected to present a choral and visual presentation during a dedication of a new airport facility in the targeted county.

The total number of students was 1202. The school however, did not reflect the ethnic mix of the target community. With the bussing of students from the inner city, the black student population consisted of 203 students, or 17%; the white population was 970 or 81%; and the remainder of the students were Hispanic at 2% and Asian at .7%.

The attendance of the students was at the same percentile as the state with a total of 94%. The average class size was 27%, higher than the district's 24%. The student mobility rate was low in this area, 28%, compared to 37% in the district.

The school served 33% of the students a free or reduced-price lunch, which was low by comparison with the district's 47%. Many of these low-income students were in the kindergarten classes. Only 2% of the kindergarten students in this program had a preschool experience.

Almost 10% of the students were in need of Exceptional Student Education (ESE). These services included assistance with speech, language, or other disabilities. The students with mild specific disabilities, such as emotional disabilities, visual disabilities, or physical disabilities, made up 11% of the total population.

There were a total of 93 staff members which included 57 instructors. Two of the 48 female instructors were black, all other staff members were white. The staff reflected strong training backgrounds and teaching experience. Only 14% of the instructors had less than three years of teaching experience, 43% held a Master's Degree, and one teacher held a Doctorate Degree.

The writer was not employed by the school district during this practicum. After receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Speech and Theatre in 1979, the writer worked for several years as a performer and manager in the entertainment industry. In 1984, the writer changed direction and received a certificate in legal technologies and worked five years as a paralegal. In 1989, the writer completed an alternative teacher preparation program, however, before completing the program, accepted a position with the county library system, as a Children's Program

Specialist. In this position, the writer prepared and presented story and puppet programs and was also responsible for presenting storytelling workshops. After six years with the county library system, the writer is currently a Staff Development Specialist. Responsibilities in this position include coordination of new employee orientation, the annual training conference, other staff training, team building, and youth services. The writer is a member of the state library association, a state training association, and on both the state library and county training committees. Further involvement includes cooperation with the school district on carrying out guidelines of a grant partnership and in promoting the enjoyment of reading to children in the community.

Problem Statement

"Movies, television, video and the print around us make this a predominantly visual age. Auditory media such as radio and tape may foster "lazy" or passive listening requiring little concentration on language or content. As a result, American children today are poor listeners" according to Briggs and Wagners (cited by Zobairi & Gulley, 1989, p.8). Storytelling is important because it develops many areas of learning and creativity. Children participate through listening and

visualizing the stories and through telling stories from folktales, fairy tales, fables, myths and legends.

An annual Storytelling Festival has been presented every spring at various public libraries in the target county. It occurs simultaneously at several locations throughout the county on a Saturday morning. Sponsors of the festival are the target school district, the county media education association, and the public library system. The media specialists in the public schools are responsible for training and selecting participants to tell stories at the festival. Up to 10 participants in the Storytelling Festival were allowed from each school. The objectives of the event are: to promote oral communication and tradition, stimulate creative imagination, and to develop self-confidence and public speaking skills. Along with these goals, participants gain an appreciation of the art of storytelling without the fear of competition.

The writer examined the attendance records of the Storytelling Festival participants for the past seven years. The target elementary school of this study was the only public elementary school in the community that did not participate nor did the records show any other type of involvement from the media specialists in the school. Since each

of the schools have been encouraged to participate in some manner, and the target school had never participated, there was a 100% discrepancy in involvement in the festival.

The results of a survey (Appendix A, p.37) of the teachers in the target school, showed that 100% of the teachers surveyed felt there was a direct relationship between communication skills and storytelling and that narrative writing scores would improve following students' participation in storytelling. The survey showed that 95% of the teachers felt public speaking skills would improve and 86% felt expository writing assessment scores would also improve following the participation. The survey also showed that 86% of the teachers would like to see more student involvement in the Annual Storytelling Festival and furthermore, 90% of the teachers would have been willing to send students to the Media Center for 12 weeks for a course in storytelling. The teachers reported that participation in storytelling might also improve reading skills, sequencing, comprehension, oral language, vocabulary, and imagination.

A possible cause for the lack of involvement in storytelling activity, may have been due to personnel changes in the Media Center, and the

fact that the previous media specialist was working out of field. The new media specialist, who was working toward a Master Degree in Educational Media, showed an interest in storytelling. However, both media specialists were concentrating on serving and improving other areas of the Media Center. Upon questioning, the writer found out that the new media specialist wanted the school to participate in the festival, but did not know how to implement the program.

The possible effect of not participating in storytelling, might have been reflected in below state average scores in narrative and expository writing. Being able to tell a story is critical in this type of writing, writing measured by the Florida Writing Assessment. The fourth graders at the target school scored 2.1% on the latest writing assessment, .2% below the state average.

The target group selected for implementation of this practicum in storytelling, was 10 students from a fourth grade class. The grade level was selected based on annual state writing assessment scores. This particular fourth grade class was selected based on the teacher's commitment to schedule the students for time in the Media Center for implementation. Although the writer made a request to work with the

entire class, the teacher did not want to excuse any more than 10 students at that time, particularly since five students were already scheduled with an ESE teacher at the same time. The teacher also believed the limited number would create a better learning environment and the teacher did not want any of the students eliminated from participating in the Annual Storytelling Festival since the rules stated that only 10 students per school could participate. The teacher selected the 10 students based on their high performance in reading, English, and class participation. There was an equal gender mix that included one black female, the rest were white. These middle class students reflected the socio economic status of the target community population and had a good record of attendance.

The writer was majoring in Educational Media in the Nova Southeastern University Masters Program, a course-of-study that supports storytelling as an important part of a well-rounded media program.

Outcome Objectives

The goal of this practicum was to introduce the targeted students to storytelling. The objectives for this practicum were as follows:

Objective number one: After 12 weeks of workshops on storytelling techniques with the target fourth graders, at least two of the students will participate in the Annual Storytelling Festival, as measured by their attendance.

Objective number two: After nine weeks of workshops on storytelling techniques with the target fourth graders, at least 50% of the students will tell a story from memory, as measured by their storytelling presentations.

Objective number three: After four weeks of workshops on storytelling techniques with the target fourth graders, at least 80% of the students will tell a story in small groups as measured by their presentations.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

Libraries have long been associated as an appropriate place to share stories. The American Association of School Libraries and the Association for Educational Communication and Technology (1988) both recognized the school library media center as a place that offered many activities that supported the teachers' curriculum needs. They identified a complete media program as one that offers involvement in the sharing of ideas and stories through storytelling and dramatic presentation, consequently, the role of the media specialist is to provide an atmosphere and opportunity for storytelling in the Media Center.

"As storyteller, the child acquires confidence, self-esteem, and several essential skills which influence later learning, and enhance personal and social development" (Zobairi & Gulley, 1989, p.16). To develop these skills, children need an opportunity to acquire the techniques to become storytellers. Zobairi and Gulley, who studied the importance of oral storytelling for children, found that storytelling was not as successful

when associated with the pressures of learning. Teachers need to find a way of introducing storytelling to children in an environment where they can bring out artistic qualities without inhibitions and the risk of failure. Most teachers feel comfortable reading stories from a book and often ask children to read aloud from books. While reading aloud is very beneficial, it does not develop the oral skills or self-confidence on the same level as storytelling.

Maquire (cited by Cooper, 1989) discovered that when read to, children focus on the book instead of the text of the story. Cooper acknowledged that the educational and social benefits of storytelling for children are numerous and well documented. Storytelling is not a passive activity for the listener. It requires interaction and sometimes verbal responses. Peck, (1989) a professional storyteller and former classroom teacher, has found that listeners provide necessary feedback to the teller. The storyteller evaluates the performance based on the appeal of the audience and prepares future presentations accordingly. Some teachers, however, prefer to have less involvement in coaching the student storyteller. Hoyt (1992) reported that the teacher's role was to be a supporter not a director.

Zobairi and Gulley (1989) stressed the need to create an atmosphere that supported both the listener and teller. A regular time set aside for sharing stories, they said, stimulates creative imagination. The successful storytelling workshop includes sessions involving the following topics: story selection, warmup exercises, vocalization exercises, character development, story sequencing, and preparation for live performance. Woodard (1990) told librarians who were beginning a storytelling workshop, that it becomes easier with practice; that it is worth the efforts when materials from the stories begin to circulate.

The students should be encouraged to select stories from folklore, fairy tales, myths, legends, and fables, because the sequencing in these tales makes it easy to learn. The stories must be age-appropriate, enjoyable to the teller, and not dependent on illustrations. "Stories that are good telling stories offer the framework shown to be a significant factor in reading comprehension" (Peck, 1989, p.140). The storyteller should identify the beginning, middle, and ending focal points. Hamilton and Weiss (1991) discovered that only through experience, will the teller learn to make sound judgments regarding the criteria in story selection. The student should read the story aloud several times

before making a final selection. The storyteller should only tell stories they enjoy.

Many media specialists who are new to storytelling, lack the necessary experience to present workshops on the techniques. According to the Tampa/Hillsborough County Storytelling Committee (1992), before introducing new storytelling workshops, the instructor must research the history of storytelling and share reasons why it is considered an oral tradition. Bauer (1993), however, did not find that it was necessary to discuss the contents of a story, history, or guidelines, but simply to get right to work. Some instructors begin by sharing personal life experiences and histories (Combs & Beach, 1994). According to Combs and Beach, most children, who participated in storytelling workshops, were more comfortable sharing personal stories before venturing into literature. Bauer suggested that the students should begin with a group activity of telling short nursery rhymes, jokes, or fables in the early sessions to create a less inhibited atmosphere. As students begin to relax, they can focus on the presentation of storytelling without the stress of the traditional classroom. Dwyer (1988) found the key to reading motivation depended largely upon the

environment and enthusiastic telling of stories and concluded that the most important element in storytelling is telling a good story effectively and not the application of instruction.

Bunker (1991) studied the relationship between the motor domain and self-esteem. Through movement, children gain confidence and begin to release inhibitions. Music can motivate students to participate in motor activities and also release the stress associated with public speaking. Because of this, the instructor should guide the students through physical warmups during the opening of each storytelling session.

To be effective storytellers, students need training in vocal techniques as well. Exercises in articulation and use of the diaphragm will increase their vocal quality and help students gain confidence in the presentation of stories. Tongue twisters are useful tools for diction exercises and to release inhibitions. Vocal exercises should include word emphasis, volume, feeling and mood, tempo/rate, and pitch (Hamilton & Weiss, 1991).

Characterization is an important aspect in storytelling. Students should describe the characters' appearance and give a brief biographical

description of human characters. When Hamilton and Weiss walked around the room as characters from the story, the students gained insight into characterization techniques. Accents, however, are not a part of character development, the only time dialects are suitable is when they are authentic and consistent (Young, 1989). The novice storyteller runs the risk of mixing up the characters and the accents. Another technique for character development includes the use of improvisational exercises. Following the reading of a story from a picture book, Zingher (1995), the storyteller observed as students created similar characters through group improvisations. Zingher suggested the ideal group would be intimate; perhaps a half group or elective, such as a media club. By grouping the students, the media specialist can extend the vision of a supportive, noncompetitive atmosphere where students can become play makers and story makers.

Wright (1990, p.6) studied the relationship of drama to developmental trends through a longitudinal study of students in kindergarten through grade six. The hypothesis was that "artistic role playing is based on conscious choices about the attitude and actions of a character that are then communicated to other actors in role and finally

to an audience." Wright found that the use of improvisation develops natural skills through creative drama and is most effective when experienced before using scripts.

To help students learn the sequences in a story, the media specialist will need to design some workshops for different learning styles. The visual learners need to read the story at least five times and the use of pictorial outlines helps to reinforce the visual image (Hamilton & Weiss, 1991). Auditory learners, however, retain the sequences by retelling the story in their own words. Zobairi and Gulley (1989) agreed that, while it is important to learn the essential features, effective storytellers do not memorize the entire story. Most storytellers memorize the beginning, ending, and key sentence phrasing. Finally, the kinetic learner will gain the best control over the sequence by physically living the story. Reeves (1993) concluded, that by acting out a story, the students retained the story longer. Bauer's (1993) philosophy, however, is that storytellers are not actors and warns against acting out the story.

"Preparing and telling stories help develop poise in the student storyteller, and a well-told story builds the self esteem of the teller" (Peck, 1989, p.140). The students must practice telling the stories as if

each story was the actual event, only with a live audience. The students should recite their name and the title of the story as an introduction. The media specialist should reinforce the need, of the storytellers, to wear comfortable clothing and the storyteller should give prior notification of unusual equipment needs. The media specialist should design a form to evaluate the technique as the students practice and take notes during storytelling to avoid interrupting the students' concentration according to Bauer.

To focus efforts on building self-esteem and communication skills, Williamson and Mastro (1990) designed a storytelling program for the entire community. It was considered a success because it brought generations together and reached everyone in some way. The best way to involve the community is by inviting school children and their families to the public library for storytelling. A storytelling festival not only encourages reading, it also enhances the school and public library cooperation according to Young (1987).

Planned Solution Strategy

The writer planned to use the strategies developed by Hamilton and Weiss (1991) to build a program on storytelling techniques at the target

school. The writer also planned to use the strategies of Zobairi and Gulley (1989), by providing an opportunity to learn techniques in an artistic atmosphere without the fear of competition.

CHAPTER III

Method

Prior to actual implementation, the writer completed the arrangements and scheduling with the participating teacher and students. The writer met with the group for an hour, once a week, on Tuesdays at 1:30. Each session was held in the video production area of the Media Center and the practicum strategies were implemented over a 12-week period. The writer also planned to attend the Annual Storytelling Festival to support the participating students.

During week one, the writer asked each of the 10 students to introduce themselves and give a brief background, including hobbies, participation in sports, and any experience in performing. The writer gave a brief history and guidelines of storytelling and the district's Annual Storytelling Festival. The writer also gave an overview of the 12-weeks of workshops and distributed a packet which included the following handouts: a description of tell-able tales; note paper; an American Library Association promotional reading bookmark, sticker,

and reading log; and a pencil. A permission letter for entering the Storytelling Festival was also given to each student. The writer discussed the five acceptable styles of stories to be used in storytelling and showed examples from books in the school's Media Center. Some of the students checked these sample books out of the Media Center. The school's new media specialist gave a brief talk on suggestions for learning stories and also supported the workshops and the festival. The writer then told Where the Wild Things Are, by Maurice Sendak, to model storytelling techniques and followed that with round-robin storytelling. In this improvisation, the students sat in a circle as one student told a story and then spontaneously tossed a bean bag to another student who continued the story. The story continued until all students had a chance to participate. This exercise helped the students improvise and learn to tell the story in their own words. All the students then took turns reading parts of tongue twister exercise known as "Grip-Top Sock." They also told clean jokes, riddles, and knock-knocks from a book provided by the writer.

During week two, the writer collected the permission forms for participation in the Storytelling Festival and the students participated in

the round-robin storytelling and warmup stretching exercises to release inhibitions. A vocal warmup included "Grip-Top Sock." After this, the writer distributed a handout on story selection criteria (Appendix B, p.40) and discussed it with the students. The writer then reviewed some stories already collected by the students, and all of the students participated in charades for character building and teamwork. The writer selected the charade topics from storybooks, contemporary movies, and songs. One student told a short fable from memory for possible use in the Storytelling Festival.

During week three, each student participated in group readings from Shel Silverstein poems that were selected by the writer. Silverstein's poems have good characters and can be read in tandem or with groups. Six students read stories aloud to evaluate the appropriateness of the story and to see if the length of time met the guidelines of the Storytelling Festival.

During week four, the writer divided the students into two groups and gave them scripts and a few props for creative dramatics. One group dramatized a version of the folktale called "The Turnip" and the other group recreated the characters from a picture book called The

Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything by Linda Williams. These stories were selected because of the number of characters, repetitive phrasing, and interesting characters. This exercise was used to help the students gain the experience of performing in front of an audience. The writer recorded 100% participation in storytelling in small groups which met Outcome Objective number three. Three students told stories from memory and the media specialist shared more selections of stories with students who had not yet made their selections.

During week five, the students received a worksheet for story sequencing (Appendix C, p.42) and the writer reviewed it. Four more students read stories aloud to determine their appropriateness for the Storytelling Festival. The students who had not selected a story to tell, examined the collection in the Media Center, with assistance from the media specialist. All the students took part in a group improvisation conducted by the writer. In this exercise, students sat in a circle and the first student started the story by saying "When I go to California, I'm going to bring" and added any object. The second student repeated the sentence of the previous student and added a new object. Each student had a turn to participate by reciting in the exact order, all that went

before and added a new object. The purpose of this exercise was to develop memory and observation.

During week six, four students told stories from memory. The writer used an evaluation form (Appendix D, p.44) to critique the students' beginning skill level. The form included: appropriateness of story, memory, vocal quality, characterization, presentation, and delivery. The writer gave a score in each area and compared this later with a score given in the eleventh week. The evaluation form was a tool for measuring the skill level and areas of improvement for a festival quality performance. The evaluations were for the writer's measuring purposes only, not for students, teachers, family, or any other individuals. During the sessions, four students read different versions of stories to find the best selection for the festival. All the students participated in "When I Go To California" conducted by the writer.

During week seven, the writer started the workshop with round-robin storytelling. Seven students told stories which were evaluated by the writer for festival quality. All of the students then dramatized an African tale by Verna Aardema called Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain, while the writer told the story. The writer worked with individuals to

improve lower scoring areas based on the evaluations from the week before. A kindergarten class, the "study buddy" of the target fourth grade class, and the remaining 18 students in the target class, were scheduled to attend a preview performance at the target school during week 12 of the workshops.

During week eight, a guest storyteller, arranged by the writer, told The Willy Nilly Man and Old One Eye by George Elrick. The writer and guest storyteller discussed techniques for learning stories and the expectations of the Storytelling Festival. The writer continued to help three students select appropriate stories and, later, also discussed concerns with the classroom teacher about these three students.

During week nine, all, except three students, told a story from memory, meeting Outcome Objective number two. The writer discussed how to perfect storytelling techniques and discussed the guidelines for formal presentations. The students watched a videotape from a previous Storytelling Festival to observe students who showed good characterization and vocal range. Two students worked on learning their stories, with the writer as a coach. The writer asked the classroom teacher to give additional encouragement to these two. After a

parent/teacher conference, it was determined that one of the students should be permanently excused from the storytelling workshop because of a leg injury that would take several weeks to heal. Another student, who was suspended, lost the privilege of continuing in the workshops. The student, however, asked to remain in the workshop, and since the writer saw great potential in the student, the student was allowed to return to the workshop week 10.

During week 10, all of the students sang a song they had learned in class which improved their volume and articulation. The writer reviewed the criteria for storytelling techniques based on the evaluation form from week six. The students recalled some of the techniques observed in the video from week nine. All of the students who had not told a story during week nine, told stories from memory this week. The students were encouraged to discuss any concerns they had about the preview performance scheduled for week 12 and the Annual Storytelling Festival. The students then volunteered for the order of telling stories in the up-coming preview performance. All of the students then participated in "When I Go To California" for memorization techniques. The writer discussed the progress of the students and

arrangements for the preview performance with the classroom teacher and the media specialist. The principal at the target school was also invited to the preview performance.

During week 11, the students prepared for the preview performance. The writer measured the progress of each storyteller against previous evaluations taken during week six. The students modeled good listening skills and observed storytelling techniques as each student told a story in the same order and with the professional quality expected for the preview performance.

During week 12, the nine students presented a preview performance for a kindergarten class, the other students in their fourth grade class, and the school principal. The principal showed additional support to the students by videotaping the performance. During the preview, the writer continued to monitor the progress of each storyteller and the other students and kindergarten class had excellent listening skills. The writer distributed programs which gave the title of the story and the storyteller. At the end, the participating students received a certificate of completion for the 12 weeks of storytelling workshops. The students were featured in a newspaper article (Appendix E. p.46) in a local paper.

The final stories selected were based on the following folktales, fairy tales, and books: "The Gingerbread Man," "How the Elephant Got His Trunk," Millions of Cats by Wanda Gag, Pecos Bill Finds a Horse by Kathy Darling, "The Rooster That Went to His Uncle's Wedding," "The Three Little Pigs," Tikki Tikki Tembo by Arlene Mosel, The Tin Soldier by Hans Christian Andersen, and "The Wolf and the Crane." Later in the week, the writer met individually with each student to finalize the plans for the Annual Storytelling Festival which was to be held in two weeks. During this meeting, the students were in a relaxed mood sitting on an outside picnic bench. Each one of the eight participants told their story one final time to the writer before their participation in the Storytelling Festival. The students had excellent concentration and were able to discuss concerns about performing before the festival audience.

CHAPTER VI

Results

The results of the three objectives for the practicum are listed below:

Objective number one: The objective was that after 12 weeks of workshops on storytelling techniques with the target fourth graders, at least two of the students would participate in the Annual Storytelling Festival, as measured by their attendance. The writer attended the Annual Storytelling Festival and supported the seven target students who told stories. The writer was told a week before the festival that one student and the student's family had to leave the area for more than a week to take care of a sick family member, so at the time of the festival, only eight students were registered. One student from the target school overslept and did not attend the Annual Storytelling Festival. The writer received a copy of the registration form and official program, listing the names of participants and schools. At least two students from the target school needed to tell a story to meet the criterion for objective

number one, since seven actually participated, objective number one was successful.

Objective number two: The objective was that after nine weeks of workshops on storytelling techniques with the target fourth graders, at least 50% of the students would tell a story from memory, as measured by their storytelling presentations. The writer gave each student an opportunity to tell a story from memory to the entire group. The writer recorded a total of seven students who told a story from memory. The criterion for objective number two was met when 70% of the students told a story from memory by week number nine.

Objective number three: The objective was that after four weeks of workshops on storytelling techniques with the target fourth graders, at least 80% of the students would tell a story to a small group as measured by their presentations. The writer recorded the number of participants who performed in a group. All of the students participated in group storytelling to meet the criterion for objective number three.

Chapter V

Recommendations

The writer discussed the results of the participation in the Annual Storytelling Festival and the workshops on storytelling techniques with the classroom teacher and the media specialists. All were in agreement that the experience and exposure to storytelling were beneficial to the students and target school. The media specialists would like participation in the Storytelling Festival to become part of the curriculum at the target school. The writer suggested that the new media specialist get a commitment from one teacher for weekly workshops on teaching storytelling techniques and to also consider inviting back some of the students who participated in the festival. The writer also suggested using a space in the Media Center with tables and chairs for a more formal environment. The video production area atmosphere was at times too informal. The writer offered to provide materials on storytelling techniques to the media specialist. The students were always anxious to participate in group improvisations.

Both media specialists participated, as moderators, in the Annual Storytelling Festival for the first time. They enjoyed the experience and discovered new stories to tell students. In addition, the media specialists made a quality videotape of the target students telling a story to be viewed by other students in the target school. The media specialists also asked some of the target students to tell a story to students in other classes.

The target students arrived early at the festival, nicely dressed, and with family members. The writer observed at least one family receiving new library cards. All of the storytellers received a new book, donated by the participating schools. The writer appreciated the opportunity to work with the students and to have 100% participation of public elementary schools in the target community for the first time in 14 years of the Annual Storytelling Festival.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Elementary School Teacher Survey

APPENDIX A

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER SURVEY

This survey is intended to assess your opinion on the relationship between communication skills and participation in storytelling.

Directions: Please read each question and circle the answer that best describes your feelings.

1. There is a direct relationship between communication skills and storytelling.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
(76%)	(24%)	

2. Narrative writing skills improve following participation in storytelling.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
(43%)	(57%)	

3. Expository writing skills improve following participation in storytelling.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
(34%)	(52%)	(14%)

4. Self-confidence increases following participation in storytelling.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
(57%)	(38%)	(5%)

5. Public speaking skills increase following participation in storytelling.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
(71%)	(24%)	(5%)

APPENDIX A

6. Please comment on other skills that participation in storytelling might improve.

   Reading Skills, Sequencing, Comprehension, Expression, Imagination, Oral Language, Body Language, Sense of Story, Plot, Setting, Characters, Story Webs, Vocabulary, Verbal Fluency, and Early Literacy Skills.

7. Would you like to see more student involvement in the Annual Storytelling Festival, sponsored by the Media Association and County Library System?

Yes	No
(86%)	(14%)

8. Would you be willing to send students from your class to the Media Center once a week for 12 weeks for a course in Storytelling?

Yes	No
(90%)	(10%)

APPENDIX B

Criteria for Story Selection and Guidelines

APPENDIX B

CRITERIA FOR STORY SELECTION AND GUIDELINES

Stories must be some good "old-fashioned" stories known from Fairy tales, Folktales, Legends, Fables, and Myths.

Stories must be well rehearsed -
No scripts or cue cards are allowed.

No props or costumes are allowed.

A maximum time limit is seven minutes -
Stories average three to five minutes.

APPENDIX C

Story Sequencing

APPENDIX C

STORY SEQUENCING

After reading the story 4 or 5 times, see if you can remember the sequence of events. Read it aloud several times. Try to write or tell the story in your own words. Use the form below to write down the main parts of the story.

Student's Name _____

Name of Story _____

Author _____

What is the beginning? List any problems.

_____

_____

_____

What is the middle?

_____

_____

_____

What is the end?

_____

_____

_____

What is the most exciting part of the story?

_____

_____

_____

List any phrases that should be memorized.

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX D

Storytelling Criteria Evaluation

APPENDIX D

STORYTELLING CRITERIA EVALUATION

STUDENT'S NAME:

SKILL	EXCITING	GOOD	ADEQUATE	NEEDS WORK

	WEEK 6	11	WEEK 6	11	WEEK 6	11	WEEK 6	11
Appropriateness of story								
Memory								
Vocal Quality								
Character								
Poise								
Delivery								

COMMENTS:

APPENDIX E

Newspaper Article

APPENDIX E

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

2S — [redacted] Tuesday, April 23, 1996

Fourth-graders perfect their storytelling skills

School Daze

Nine pupils in [redacted] fourth grade at [redacted] Elementary School have spent many hours preparing for the 14th annual Children's Storytelling Festival, which will be sponsored by the [redacted] County Library May 4.

The pupils have been under the direction of [redacted], a [redacted] County Library employee. [redacted] began meeting with the children last January to teach them the fine art of storytelling.

During their weekly meetings, the pupils have had the opportunity to observe other storytellers, be involved in creative dramatics and practice their own stories to improve skills before the festival begins.

As a final preparation, the storytellers conducted a Storytelling Festival Preview Performance for their fellow classmates and kindergarten study-buddies April 9.

Members of the storytelling team include [redacted] and [redacted]

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